



Brule River State Forest Visitor



Brule River State Forest • P.O. Box 125 • Brule, WI 54820 • www.dnr.wi.gov

What Makes a “State” Forest?

The idea of the Brule River State Forest began in 1907 when Frederick Weyerhaeuser gifted over 4000 acres to the state of Wisconsin. This land was officially declared a state forest in 1936. Since that beginning, the state has continued to purchase lands, bringing the land base of the Brule River State Forest to its current 43,000 acres. So, what goes on there and why?

State forests take their mission charge from state statutes. The law that describes state forests was rewritten in the mid-1990’s to better reflect the role of these properties and to provide future direction for their management. This new law, carefully crafted through the participation of citizens, lawmakers, and foresters, is important to understanding the management of the state forests.

Wisconsin Statute 28.04(2)(a): Purposes and benefits of state forests. “The department shall manage the state forests to benefit the present and future generations of residents of this state, recognizing that the state forests contribute to local and statewide economies and to a healthy natural environment. The department will assure the practice of sustainable forestry and use it to assure that state forests can provide a full range of benefits for present and future generations. The department shall also assure that the management of state forests is consistent with the ecological capability of the state forest land and with the long-term maintenance of sustainable forest communities and ecosystems. These benefits include soil protection, public hunting, protection of water quality, production of recurring forest products, outdoor recreation, native biological diversity, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, and aesthetics. The range of benefits provided by the department in each state forest will reflect its unique character and position in the regional landscape. (b) In managing the state forests, the department shall recognize that not all benefits under par. (a) can or should be provided in every area of a state forest. (c) In managing the state forests, the department shall recog-

nize that management may consist of both active and passive techniques.”

What does this mean at the Brule River State Forest? It means that everything that foresters plan for the forest is driven by the principles of sustainable forestry. The full range of benefits and the impacts of management are considered for both present and future generations. Management therefore incorporates the ecosystem and the full-range view in management decisions. Forest management activities may be used to restore areas of the forest to pre-settlement conditions, to create and diversify wildlife habitat, to provide forest products, to protect water resources, or for many other purposes working to enhance sustainability. In each of these examples, the different benefits of the forest are recognized and the long-term goals are a key component.

But keep in mind not everything is done everywhere. Careful consideration is given to the ecological potential of each area of the forest. The public was actively engaged in developing a master plan declaring primary area goals.

Sustainability also means that the forest will be responsibly managed for the social needs of the people that seek out the Brule for recreation. This means that certain activities may be regulated to preserve the “Brule experience” for future generations; for instance, glass bottles are prohibited on the river and all cargo must be secured in one’s watercraft.

The Brule River State Forest is a unique ecological assembly. The scientific and cultural character of the property is recognized and the forest is managed to preserve and enhance that character. Management is performed according to the goals established in the master plan, which was approved in late 2002. The forest is an active laboratory for demonstrating sustainable and integrated management, as well as a working partnership with the watershed, fish, threatened and endangered resources, and wildlife disciplines, and the citizens that use the forest.

Private Property Owners Are “Stake-Holders” in the Brule River State Forest

Within the 52,000 gross acres of the state forest, about 12,000 acres are owned privately. The owners of these lands play a significant role in the management of the state forest and the Brule River.

A large group of landowners with river frontage on the Brule, from County Highway B to Stone’s Bridge, has been particularly involved in protecting the unique character of the river.

In 1950, many of these landowners banded together to form a corporation to purchase and hold lands for the purpose of protecting the river from incompatible development. Today its successor, Brule

River Preservation, Inc., serves primarily as a non-profit charitable foundation to seek out and contribute financially to projects, which enhance the Brule River and forest.

In the early 1980’s, most of these same landowners signed individual agreements with the Nature Conservancy to protect almost 5,700 acres of land containing important natural communities along 9 miles of wild riverbank. This property is protected, entirely through the voluntary participation of these landowners, from unwarranted alteration in perpetuity.



Brule River State Forest History

The Bois Brule River Valley and the uppermost St. Croix River Valley were carved by melt water flowing south from glacial Lake Superior and the surrounding uplands. When the glaciers receded, a divide was formed out of which the Brule and St. Croix Rivers flow today in opposite directions. A portage was established between these two rivers, connecting Lake Superior and the Mississippi River watersheds. It was used by early native people and later by European explorers, traders, trappers, and missionaries.

Native Americans were active in the Brule area as early as 1400 when the Mascoutins, “people of fire,” were the major inhabitants. The Sauk and Sioux Indians also inhabited the area up until the 1600’s, when the Chippewa moved into the area from the east. The earliest recorded name of the Brule River comes from the Chippewa word “Misacoda” or “burnt pines” in English. The early French gave us the name, Bois Brule, that means “burnt wood river.”

The Indians undoubtedly used the Brule as a travel route from Lake Superior to the Mississippi via the St. Croix. The early European’s first recorded visit to the Brule was by Daniel Greysolon Siur du Lhut in 1680. DuLhut said he cut through some 100 beaver dams before passing through the Brule River. Many other explorers, traders, missionaries, and trappers used this water highway up until the mid-19th century. Exploration for copper and other minerals took place near the Brule in 1840 by the Jacob Astor Company. After dying down for several years, mineral exploration became active again in the 1880’s and 1890’s. The remains of these mines may be seen along the Old Bayfield Road Trail.

The Bayfield Road was once the overland route from Superior to Bayfield. Hikers in the state forest can follow this historic road, once traveled by horse drawn wagon and foot, today.

Early historical evidence indicates that natural and man-caused fire had a significant impact on the area. The Brule area began to be recognized as a recreational resource in the mid-1800’s. Cutting of the pine forests began in the 1890’s. Logging dams and log drives had severe impacts on the river during that period of exploitive logging. The exploitation was followed by wildfire and burning to clear the land for agricultural purposes. In the 1930’s, most attempts at agriculture were abandoned, and a fledgling forestry program was in place. The Civilian Conser-

vation Corps camp at Brule assisted in early fire control and reforestation efforts from 1933 to 1941.

The Brule River State Forest began with a gift from Frederick Weyerhaeuser’s Nebagamon Lumber Company in 1907. Today, the state forest contains the entire length of the Bois Brule River. The river is spring-fed and runs cold and clear with a steady flow. The river falls 420 feet from its source to Lake Superior, resulting in numerous rapids and ledges. These attributes help give the Brule its reputation as an excellent coldwater fishery and canoeing stream. Over 120,000 recreationists visit the state forest annually. Famous visitors include 5 men who were U.S. presidents: Ulysses Grant, Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, and Dwight Eisenhower.

It was not until the late 1950’s that a full-time superintendent was assigned to the Brule River State Forest and a sustained yield forestry program and recreation facilities began to be developed. The first forest staff was stationed at the former Gordon State Forest Nursery. In 1963, the staff was moved to quarters in the Brule Ranger Station. The boundaries of the state forest were changed over time. Some significant changes were made in 1959, when the boundary was extended to include Lake Minnesuing on the southwest and the river corridor north of US Highway 2 to Lake Superior. In 1979, several miles of Lake Superior shoreline were added to the Brule River State Forest.

This Paper Aims to Help You Enjoy Your Visit

This *Visitor* is published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to help you enjoy your visit. The information it contains represents the answers to the questions most commonly asked about the Brule River State Forest. If you have other questions, please ask forest staff for assistance.

The *Visitor* is free to forest visitors. Any material in it may be reproduced as long as the Department of Natural Resources is acknowledged as the source.

Please don’t throw the *Visitor* away. Take it home for future reference or pass it on to a friend. Thank you for visiting the Brule River State Forest.

The Bois Brule - a Canoeist's Paradise



Whether you are in the mood for a peaceful float with the family or the challenge of an exciting ride through whitewater, the Brule River can fulfill your dream.

This unique river varies from a meandering stream in a conifer bog to a tumbling, churning torrent falling madly toward Lake Superior. This spring-fed river lies in a small watershed and thus the level remains relatively constant. The total elevation drop of the river is 418 feet, with 328 feet of that drop in the last 19 miles.

There are ten designated canoe landings on state land on the Brule River. In order to protect and preserve the shorelines of the river, all watercraft launching and landing on state lands are restricted to these ten sites. Two of those sites are at the two state forest campgrounds, Bois Brule and Copper Range, and are designed for use by canoeists who are camping at those campgrounds (see map).

The most popular canoe trip on the Brule begins at Stone's Bridge canoe landing. This trip starts out on pretty flat water winding through cedar, spruce, and balsam bog forests. After about 1½ hours,

the perceptive canoeist will notice subtle changes in the surroundings. The river bottom will brighten up from silt to clean gravel, and river current will increase noticeably. The river traveler will soon pass through the first of the privately-owned estates and lodges along this stretch of river. After a few easy rapids, the canoeist will come upon a narrow chute where the river scurries out of a small placid lake. From there to Big Lake, a widening in the river occurs and there are a few more exciting runs. After Big Lake, it takes approximately one hour to arrive at Winneboujou canoe landing. Another popular take out on this section of river is to continue on from Winneboujou to the Highway 2 landing.

The confirmed whitewater canoeist or kayaker will be interested in getting right into the action by starting at Pine Tree landing. This trip takes the paddler through nearly continuous stretches of ledges and rapids before arriving at the Highway 13 landing. Before embarking on this trip, newcomers should scout the river from Highway FF bridge and/or Mays Ledges angler access. During times of high water, increased caution is urged before considering this section of river.



Classification of Rapids

The following ratings are based on the International Scale of River Difficulty (ISRD), as described in *Whitewater; Quietwater*¹. The rapids and their location are indicated on the map. These ratings are intended to give the canoeist an idea of what to expect along the river. The water levels along the river can fluctuate. It is important for the canoeist to be aware of river conditions and the seasonal variations that occur. The Department does not monitor the river for these changing conditions and cannot guarantee the accuracy of the ratings for any given time. Please be careful, use common sense, and enjoy your canoe trip on the Bois Brule River.

Class I – These are very easy rapids that have small, uniform waves with clear channels. If there are obstacles (e.g. rock gardens) that require maneuvering to avoid, there is little current to interfere or to increase the hazard of a mistake. Fast moving water with riffles and small waves are characteristic. Class I rapids should cause no problem for novices in open canoes.

Class II – These are relatively easy rapids with only intermediate difficulty or with longer, more continuous stretches of easy rapids. Novices with decked craft should have few problems with class II. Occasional maneuvering may be required which can be handled by persons of intermediate ability using open canoes.

Class III – These are difficult rapids with numerous, large, irregular waves, capable of swamping an open canoe. Intricate maneuvering, physical strength, and canoeing know-how are all necessary to get through class III rapids. We recommend using only decked boats, thereby avoiding all chance of swamping. Some experts are able to run class III rapids in open boats; however, we recommend against this.

Approximate Times Between Landings

Stones Bridge to Winneboujou	4 hours
Stones Bridge to Bois Brule Picnic/Canoe Landing	4 ¾ hours
Winneboujou to Bois Brule Picnic Area/Canoe Landing	45 minutes
Winneboujou to Hwy 2	1¼ hours
Hwy 2 to Pine Tree	4 hours
Pine Tree to Hwy 13	5 hours
Hwy 13 to Mouth of the Brule	4 hours

Rules of the River

Canoeists, kayakers, anglers, riverside dwellers, and others come to appreciate and respect the Brule River for its natural beauty. Adhering to the river regulations of the Brule River State Forest will provide a positive and enriching experience while on the river.

Regulations:

- Launching or landing only at designated sites on state lands (see map).
- Camping allowed only at state designated campgrounds (see map).
- Motorized watercraft and inflatables are prohibited on the river, except within 1 mile of the mouth at Lake Superior.
- An approved, wearable PFD (personal flotation device) - one for each occupant.
- Glass bottles are prohibited.
- Unopened or empty beverage containers must be secured in a larger container that is securely fastened to the craft.

Courtesy:

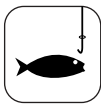
Remember

- Leave no trace
- Whatever you pack in you pack out
- Use quiet voices
- Show respect and sensitivity to others enjoying the river



¹Palzer, Bob and Jody, *Whitewater; Quietwater*, 8th edition, 2nd printing
Birmingham, AL: Menasha Ridge Press, 2001.

Bois Brule River Fishing



Anglers will find a variety of opportunities while fishing the Bois Brule River. The spring steelhead run begins in late March and extends through May. During the first several weeks of the early season, the vast majority of steelhead caught are fish that remained in the river from the previous fall run. Larger numbers of fresh, spring-run fish start appearing in April and continue through early May. Water temperatures dictate peak movement. Most fish are taken on yarn flies, spawn, large caddisfly imitations, and various types of hardware (spoons and spinners). The deep runs and pools are favorite holding areas for the fish.



Chinook salmon begin migrating up the Brule in early July and continue through mid-October. The peak period is from mid-August to late September. Most chinook are taken soon after they enter the stream. At this time they are still silver and are quite a battle for even the most experienced angler. They seem to prefer flashing lures like spinners or spoons, and tend to hold in the slower, deep water.

Coho salmon are found moving up the Brule from late August to late November. Depending on water conditions, the peak is usually sometime in September. They are fairly aggressive when they first enter the stream and can be caught on a variety of bait selections. They seem to prefer the slower water areas.

The anadromous brown trout run begins in early July and extends through late October. The peak is from mid-July to mid-September. Favorite baits include spoons, spinners, flatfish, and live bait such as night crawlers. The brown is not an easy fish to catch but with persistence and by fishing the slower, deep holes during low-light periods, the odds of landing one should be in your favor.

The fall run of steelhead begins moving up the Brule in mid-August and continues through late November. The largest runs usually occur sometime between mid-September and late October. Water conditions (e.g. temperature, level, clarity) will affect the exact timing of the run, so the peak will vary from year-to-year. One can expect to find the fish associated with the moderate velocity areas but usually behind or near some type of current break (e.g. rocks, logs, stream bank). They will tend to hold in the deeper holes as the water temperature drops later in the season. A wide variety of baits, which include yarn flies, spawn, flatfish, and all types of spoons and spinners, seems appealing to the aggressive fall-run steelhead.

The Brule River steelhead population has hit hard times since the early eighties. In an effort to rebuild their abundance, we are presently in a rehabilitation. Wild Brule River smolts are being stocked and a restrictive bag limit has been put in place.

You can also play a big part in bringing this magnificent species back by practicing catch and release. This is a very effective tool and has produced great results on other steelhead fisheries on the west coast, especially British Columbia. Tagging studies on the Brule have shown the same fish caught and released up to three times, some a year apart.

The river north of US Highway 2 has many well-marked access points all the way to Lake Superior. They are located throughout the lower river (see map) and provide an excellent opportunity to fish different sections of the river as it changes character. Brule River State Forest angler parking lots are for day use only; overnight camping is limited to designated campgrounds.



The section of river south of Highway B is noted for its resident brown and brook trout fishery. Some of the best fishing occurs in the stretch between County Highway S and County Highway B. This part of the river is slow and wide and is excellent for fly-fishing. The larger hatches of mayflies occur in this area around the end of June. This area gets a fair amount of canoe traffic during the warmer summer months.

The land adjacent to the river between Stones Bridge on County Highway S to just below County Highway B is largely privately-owned, so access is limited (see map).

For trout rules and regulations be sure to read *Wisconsin Trout Fishing Regulations and Guide*. For further fisheries information contact the Department of Natural Resources, 1705 Tower Avenue, Superior, Wisconsin 54880, and phone (715) 392-7988.

Lamprey Barrier and Fish Ladder

In 1985, a lamprey barrier and fish ladder was constructed 6.5 river miles from the mouth of the Brule. This structure allows migrating fish to safely make their way upstream for spawning, while trapping the sea lamprey. The first year in operation, over 7000 sea lamprey were trapped and destroyed.

Another benefit of this structure is the underwater viewing window, which allows fish managers to observe all migrating fish. Species, sex, and size of fish are recorded continuously to give fishery experts excellent information on the anadromous fishery of the Bois Brule.

You may visit the lamprey barrier and fish ladder by driving to the end of Loveland Road. Park by the gate and walk the final mile to the structure on the service road. Loveland Road runs north of Highway 13 on the east side of the Brule River.

Mayfly Hatches of the Bois Brule River

For the fly-fisherman, knowing when certain insects “hatch” – or become active and emerge as adults from the nymph stage of their life cycle – is of the utmost importance. On the Bois Brule River, not only the knowledge of where and when to go, but also of what to use to “match the hatch,” can play a significant role in keep-

ing a tight line all fishing season! Learning how to identify certain aquatic insects such as stoneflies, mayflies, and caddisflies, can help you tremendously in your fishing success throughout the spring and summer. Those three orders, or types of insects, often make up a very large proportion of the diet of trout during

certain time periods. On the upper Brule River, quite often the most valuable of these hatches to the fly-fisherman are those of the mayfly hatches. The following table is a short list of some of the more important mayfly hatches that occur on the upper Brule River.

Hatch (Common & Scientific Name)	Approximate Time of Emergence	Importance
Hendricksons, <i>Ephemerella subvaria</i>	Late April-Mid May, Mid afternoons	High
Sulphers, <i>Ephemerella</i> sp.	Late May-Mid June, Late afternoons/evening	High
No Name Fly, <i>Baetisca laurentina</i>	Early-Mid June, Evenings	Moderate
March Browns, <i>Stenonema vicarium</i>	Early-Mid June, Evenings	Moderate
Gray Drakes, <i>Siphonurus quebescens</i>	Early-Mid June, Evenings/Dusk	Somewhat
Brown Drakes, <i>Ephemera simulans</i>	Middle of June, Evenings/Dusk	Very High
The Hex, <i>Hexagenia limbata</i>	Mid/Late June-Mid July, Evening/Dusk	Very High
Speckled Wing Duns, <i>Callibaetis</i> sp.	Mid-Late July, Evening	Somewhat
Tricos, <i>Tricorythodes</i> sp.	Late July-Mid September, Morning	High
Blue Wing Olives, <i>Baetis</i> sp.	Various emergence times, May-September	Moderate

Other mayflies such as the light cahills, ginger quills, pale eveing duns, and tiny blue-winged olives hatch to lesser importance, but sometimes can bring up a good number of fish if you find some hatching

at exactly the right moment. Caddisfly hatches in early to mid-June can also be very abundant, and will encourage many eager brookies to rise. Later in the summer, midge hatches and terrestrial insects

will do the same. And on the lower Brule, fishing stonefly patterns are always a good fly to try and entice a large brown. See you soon on the river!



Accessible Forest Facilities

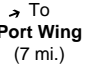
The Department of Natural Resources is making an effort to provide accessible recreation facilities for people with special needs. We would like to hear from you regarding this effort and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Currently the Brule River State Forest offers two accessible campsites, one at each campground. The Bois Brule picnic area also has accessible parking and a fishing platform.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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*fee for skiing only



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Office

Forest Headquarters in the Brule Area DNR
Office located one mile south of US 2 on
Ranger Road in Brule, WI.

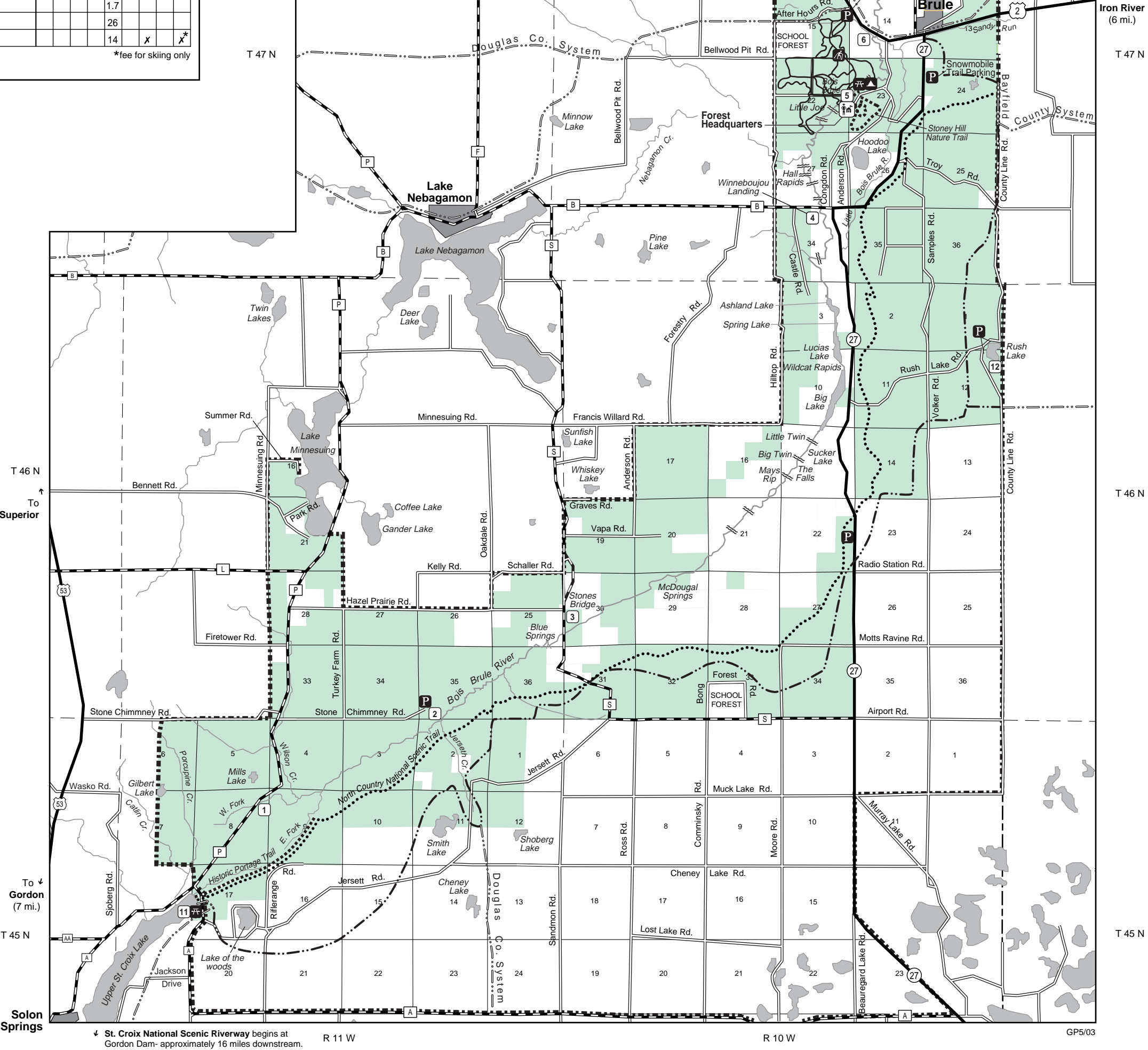
The office is open from
7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily
except weekends and holidays.

Brule River State Forest
6250 S. Ranger Rd.
Brule, WI 54820
Phone 715-372-5678

Private Facilities

For more information on resorts,
campgrounds, canoe and kayak rentals and
other facilities in the area contact:

Superior-Douglas County Convention
Center and Visitors Bureau
205 Belknap St.
Superior, WI 54880
800-942-5313
www.visitdouglascounty.com



↓ St. Croix National Scenic Riverway begins at
Gordon Dam- approximately 16 miles downstream.

R 11 W

R 10 W

GP5/03



After Hours Cross-Country Ski Trails



The Brule River State Forest has an extensive network of some of the finest and well-maintained cross-country ski trails in the region for both classical and skate skiing. The 25 kilometer After Hours Ski Trail is located west of Brule on the Afterhours Road, just south of US Highway 2. At the trailhead are restroom facilities as well as a warming shelter that is cooperatively maintained by the Brule Valley Ski Club and the Brule River State Forest.

Various loops provide a variety of terrain suitable for both the beginner skier and interesting enough for the advanced skier. Views of the scenic Bois Brule River can be seen from the River Loop.

The annual Riverview Loppet cross-country ski race for both classic and skate skiers is held the first weekend in March. This is a combined effort by the Brule River State Forest and the Brule Valley Ski Club.

A Wisconsin State Trail pass is required for skiers age 16 years and older and is available by self-registration at the trailhead.



Snowmobiles & ATVs

The Brule River State Forest has 32 miles of snowmobile trails. Snowmobiling and winter ATV use is accessed on the forest from a parking area on State Highway 27, just south of the Town of Brule. The Brule-St. Croix Trail is 26 miles long and connects the parking area on State Highway 27 to St. Croix Lake. Snowmobile connecting trails link up to Bayfield County trails and Douglas County trails. These trails may also be used as winter ATV trails. The Tri-County Corridor Trail links Superior to Ashland, crossing the forest parallel to and north of US Highway 2, and is also available for snowmobiles and ATVs. There is also access to a 4 1/2 mile trail from Miller Road north to Park Road via the Tri-County Corridor trail.

Most town roads within Brule and Highland townships are open to ATV route signs. When using these routes, ATVs must be operated on the extreme right side of the road.

Safety Messages

Biking – Be a smart cyclist. For your protection, wear shoes, pantleg clips, and a helmet when bicycling. Wear reflective clothing for bicycling at night. Keep your bike under full control at all times. Pull off the road or trail to view wildlife, flowers, or scenic views. Be cautious in areas with loose gravel or sand, wet leaves, or other loose materials. Forest roads follow the natural terrain and often have steep downgrades with corners and inter-sections. Be alert to traffic.

Boats & Canoes – All craft must be equipped with a Coast Guard approved lifesaving device for each person aboard. Wearing of these devices at all times is recommended. Don’t overload your craft. Boaters should be aware of their wake and stay well away from swimmers. If capsized in fast water, stay upstream of your canoe or boat and don’t get caught between a swamped craft and a log or rock. Be aware that sudden storms may occur. If you venture out into Lake Superior, watch the weather conditions closely.

Fire – Don’t become complacent about fire. Watch children very closely when near a fire. When setting up to use an area, become aware of the location of the fire ring. Watch the wind direction to ensure sparks aren’t near flammable materials. Put the fire out if wind changes begin to cause concern. Don’t remove hot material from the ring or grill. Make sure the fire is out and the grill or fire ring cool

before leaving the area. If using your own grill, place the coals in an available forest ring or at designated disposal sites.

Hiking – Be aware that trails may vary in difficulty. Stay well away from cliffs that aren’t protected by a barricade or barrier. Trail surfaces can become slippery when wet or leaf-covered and will occasionally have loose sand or gravel or exposed rock.

Swimming – There are no designated beaches in the Brule River State Forest. The waters of Lake Superior can be very cold with dangerous currents. Wherever you swim, don’t swim alone, at night or in unfamiliar places. Don’t dive from bridges, high banks, or into water of unknown depth. Use caution when wading in unknown waters, as water depth may change abruptly. Small children should be watched closely when near the water. Lifeguards are not provided. Public beaches are available at Lake Minnesuing and Lake Nebagamon near the state forest.

Use areas – Designated use areas are developed areas such as trails, campgrounds, and picnic areas, or other developed areas, which are inspected or maintained by the DNR and shown on the official property map. All other areas are considered undesignated, and are not inspected or maintained. Users are encouraged to limit their activities to designated areas.



Winter Safety Messages

Cross-Country Skiers – Trails are groomed, but conditions vary. Don’t ski beyond your ability. Always follow designated trail directions and leave plenty of space between you and other skiers. Ski touring is also permitted on unmarked trails throughout the forest. Ask at the forest office about trail difficulty.

Ice – The DNR does not monitor ice conditions. Be extremely cautious about ice conditions at all times. Springs, currents, and even animal activity may cause thin ice.

Pets



Dogs and other pets are allowed in most camp areas, on roads and trails, and in other areas of the forest that are not developed for public use. **Pets must be on a leash no longer than eight feet and under control at all times.** No pets are permitted in building and picnic areas or on cross-country ski trails and the Stoney Hill Nature Trail. You are responsible for your pet’s actions. If your pet is legitimately disturbing others, it is possible that you may be asked to leave the forest, be issued a citation, or both. Please clean up after your pet. Thank you for being a responsible pet owner.



The Brule Bog

Once viewed as “waste-lands,” swamps and wetlands were often drained and converted to more “useful” purposes for human developments and agriculture. Fortunately, some areas, such as the upper Bois-Brule River Bog and its associated swamp wetlands, escaped the devastating impacts of wetland drainage. This area remains in near presettlement condition and provides bountiful opportunities for viewing native plants and animals.

The swamp wetlands are comprised of 4 major habitat types: lowland conifers (balsam fir, white cedar, tamarack, black spruce, and white spruce); cedar swamps (>50% white cedar); lowland hardwoods (>50% black ash, red maple, mountain maple, and balsam poplar); and alder thickets. These wetlands can be found stretching up the river, from near Highway B to Highway P, just northeast of Solon Springs.

The white cedar swamps are the most unique and striking of the swamp wetlands. The cedars are 160 to 200 years old! Six species of orchids, including one endangered species, may be observed here. There are a total of 171 plant species found in the swamp wetlands.

Area Offers Many Attractions

You don’t have to travel far from the forest campgrounds to visit the Brule Fish Rearing Station. The grounds are open from 8:00 a.m. to dusk each day. This facility produces 700,000 trout each year to be stocked in streams and lakes around the state. The rearing station is located on the Little Brule River on Fish Hatchery Road between the DNR Headquarters and Highway 27.

Many recreational opportunities exist within a short drive of the Brule Forest. The Village of Lake Nebagamon, about 8 miles west, has a public swimming beach, ball field, and tennis courts. Lake Minnesuing also has a public beach. There are two golf courses near Lake Nebagamon, one at Poplar and another at Solon Springs.

Waterfall lovers will be sure to see Amnicon Falls State Park, 13 miles west on US Highway 2, and Pattison State Park, 24 miles west on County B.

The Iron River area, 8 miles east on US 2, has many beautiful sandy lakes, known for fishing and boating. For unique inland harbor cities, Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin are hard to beat. Shipping and waterfront attractions are available, along with museums and a variety of restaurants.

Wildlife of the Brule River State Forest

The great diversity of habitats provides abundant opportunities for anyone interested in viewing, photographing, or harvesting wildlife. The key to this diversity lies in the landforms that the Brule River has carved out in its path.

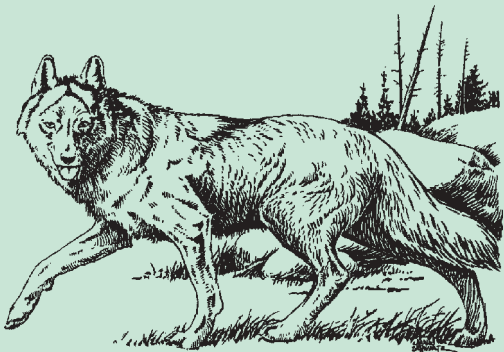
The headwaters start in the Brule Bog, which is comprised of densely forested conifer swamps, lowland hardwoods, and alder thickets along the river. Conifer trees found here are balsam fir, white cedar, black spruce, and white spruce. The swamps and alder thickets provide haven for 171 plant species, including 6 orchids, 38 species of birds, and dozens of mammals. Uncommon birds that may be found here are black-backed three-toed woodpeckers, red crossbills, Lincoln’s sparrow, and Cape May warblers. The thermal cover provided by the conifer swamps attracts wintering deer in large numbers. The high amount of deer here, however, may be impeding natural regeneration of certain trees and plants such as white cedar and white pine.

Despite the uniqueness of the Brule Bog, it is dependent on the surrounding uplands for its water source through groundwater seepage through the sand soils. The sand soils surrounding the headwaters of the Brule provide the cold-water base flow that contributes to the excellent trout fishery and water quality. This sand soils area is also important to the upland wildlife that has adapted to this disturbance-dependent community. Natural fires were once common on these dry soils and created a mosaic of large open grassy areas, shrubs, and sparse trees intermixed with mature forests dominated by Jack and red pines. This area is often referred to as “barrens” due to the lack of fertility, which forced many early settlers to other areas, or livelihoods that were not dependent on farming.

This large mosaic of habitats attracts 110 species of upland birds (30 more use the scattered small lakes and wetlands) and 19 species of mammals. Birds considered as declining nationwide but common here are sharp-tailed grouse, upland sandpipers, clay-colored sparrows, and vesper sparrows. Whip-poor-wills are a common bird nesting in large open grassy areas and are easily heard on warm summer nights. Uncommon mammals that can be seen here are badgers and timber wolves.

Species Spotlight

Timber wolves, once extirpated from Wisconsin, are now a relatively common occurrence in the Brule River Valley. The state forest is occupied by 4 different wolf packs: Shoberg Lake, Moreland Lake, Casey Creek, and Orienta packs. Currently, in 2002, each pack has 3-4 adult members that occupy the majority of the state-owned lands. Each pack’s territory includes large areas of land owned by private individuals, timber companies, and the county. The wolves occupy essentially any rural area that provides food and cover, meaning any undeveloped lands with deer, beaver, and rabbits. Evidence of wolves is most easily found in winter on freshly fallen snow, but can also be found on sand roads south of US Highway 2 any time of the year. For those interested in hearing wolves howl, try canoeing in very early morning or late evening, camping at the Copper Range campground, or using some “imitation howls” to initiate their howling. Howling can work at any time of year but is best done after dark in July and August. This is when the packs have left their dens sites and are using rendezvous sites until the pups are old enough to travel and hunt with the pack.



As the Brule River winds northward, it cuts through an area of sandy loam soils called the Mille Lacs Upland. This landform is aptly named as it stretches from northwestern Minnesota to its eastern most edge here on the Brule River State Forest. The fertility and moisture levels of this land type are intermediate between the wet soils of the Brule Bog and the infertile, dry soils of the sands region. This moderate level of fertility and moisture allow a diversity of plants and animals to flourish here, comprised of a mixture of species found in both dryer conifer soils and moister hardwood-dominated areas. This area supports the greatest area of northern red oak; in turn, this attracts large numbers of animals that feed on nature’s crops of acorns, while preparing for northern Wisconsin harsh winters. Gray squirrels, black bears, and deer are abundant near here and attract much attention during the fall hunting seasons.

As the Brule nears the end of its journey to Lake Superior, it increases its speed as it races through the old lakebed that deposited deep layers of red clay soils. The original forests and wildlife were comprised of a mixture of species

found more commonly in both the true boreal forests found to the north and deciduous hardwoods found to the south. The early settlers found these forests rich in spruce and pine, as well as in the red clay soils suitable for agriculture. Agriculture and logging followed by burning changed the character of the habitats. Steep ravines dissecting a mosaic of upland forests, comprised of early successional species such as aspen, wooded wetlands, and farmlands, now characterize this area. The steep wooded ravines offer shelter from deep winter snows and cold weather for wintering wildlife such as deer, songbirds, coyotes, and bobcats. Aspen forests provide excellent habitat for ruffed grouse, deer, bear, snowshoe hares, and woodcock for those interested in hunting opportunities. The fallow fields attract songbirds such as bobolinks, meadowlarks, marsh hawks, vesper sparrows, and upland sandpipers that historically were found in native prairies and savannas. The fertile clay soils provide opportunity to restore and enhance wetlands once altered for farming. The wetlands attract a variety of nesting and migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, and amphibians.

Trails to Take



The Historic Brule/St. Croix Portage Trail

The Brule to St. Croix Portage is part of the National Register of Historic Landmarks. This trail, just less than 2 miles one way, is the same trail used for centuries by Native Americans, explorers, traders, trappers, and missionaries. This portage was an important connecting link from the waters of Lake Superior to the Mississippi River via the Brule and St. Croix. Daniel Greysolon Sieur duLhut was the first one to record the existence of this trail in 1680. DuLhut was followed by many other notables of early American history, including Jonathon Carver and Henry Schoolcraft who were credited with discovery of the source of the Mississippi. You will enjoy this hike as it follows the upper Brule along scenic bluff tops and pine flats. Along the trail you will find several stone markers commemorating early trail users. This trail begins at the sign on County Highway A at the north end of Lake St. Croix. Parking is available in the St. Croix picnic area.

North Country Trail

A 16 mile segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail passes through the forest on its route between North Dakota and Vermont. This trail offers a true outdoor experience to its users. The trail may be accessed from a new trailhead and marker dedicated to Senator Gaylord Nelson, located 8 miles south of Brule along WI Highway 27. In addition to this trailhead, there is a NCT trailhead on Highway S and at the north end of Lake St. Croix on County Highway A, where the Brule/St. Croix Historical Portage Trail and the North Country Trail follow the same route for the first 2 miles.

Old Bayfield Road Hiking and Snowshoe Trail

This approximately 2 1/4 mile trail is located 3 miles north of Highway 2 on Clevedon Road. The trail goes eastward down a hill, past some old copper mine sites, and then climbs back up a scenic ridge passing near the Clevedon fire tower. (Please do not climb the ladder. It is illegal and it is unsafe without proper training and equipment). The trail continues south and loops back to the parking lot. During the winter months the trail is packed for snowshoeing.

Stoney Hill Nature Trail

The 1.7 mile self-guided nature trail begins and ends at the Bois Brule Campground. Parts of the trail are steep, but a rest stop and overlook at the top of Stoney Hill provides an enjoyable break, with a breathtaking view of the Brule River Valley.

Hunter Walking Trails

There are over 40 miles of hunter walking trails within the Brule River State Forest.

- Casey-Percival Creek – 14 1/4 mile trail near Copper Range campground.
- Beaufre Springs – 5 mile trail near Lake St. Croix
- Afterhours Road – 15 mile trail off of Highway 2
- Hilltop – 7.6 mile trail on County Road B near Winneboujou Landing

For additional information on the North Country Trail and other trails within the State Forest contact the Brule River State Forest Headquarters.



Bird Watching in the Brule River State Forest

A bird guide of the Brule River State Forest is available from the superintendent. To get a copy, stop at the Brule DNR office or write the forest superintendent. The guide lists species seen in the forest and habitat used. It also identifies seven easily accessible locations where people can safely stop and enjoy a wide multitude of birds. Additional information can be found in *Wisconsin Favorite Bird Haunts* published by Wisconsin’s Society of Ornithology.

The Brule River passes through a wide variety of habitats and has long been a favorite area for observing birds and other wildlife. The Brule River State Forest is home to many species, including warblers and the less common black-backed woodpecker, saw-whet owls, sharp-tailed grouse, and LeConte’s sparrow. The forest and wetlands are an important stop for

migratory birds heading further north, allowing them to maintain their health for nesting.

Spotlight:

Many species of birds reach their greatest abundance in the barrens located in and around the Brule River State Forest. Many of these species’ populations are believed to be declining based on annual surveys. Species like the sharp-tail grouse, upland sand piper, clay-colored sparrow, and rufous-sided towhee can be found in the open shrub-grass land type barrens, while the Connecticut warbler has been found in fair numbers in mature Jack pine stands.



Naturalist Programs



A naturalist offers programs from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Check the campground bulletin boards and the forest office for schedules.

Sticker Required



A vehicle admission sticker, either daily or annual, is required on all vehicles entering and stopping in the Brule River State Forest campgrounds and the Bois Brule picnic area. The annual sticker is valid at all state parks, forests, and recreation areas for the calendar year. Admission fees and camping fees help to support the state forest and park system.



Forest Campgrounds

There are two public campgrounds in the Brule River State Forest. Campsites are on a first come first serve basis. Copper Range has 17 campsites with 2 sites available for double occupancy. This campground is located approximately 4 miles north of the Village of Brule. Bois Brule, with 23 campsites, is near the Brule Forest Headquarters. Each campground provides a site for persons with disabilities. Both campgrounds are accessible by canoe. Most campsites provide adequate space for either tents or a trailer. Each site has a picnic table, fire grate, and parking for 2 vehicles. Pit toilets and hand pumps for water are provided. A state park and forest admissions sticker is required year-round for all motor vehicles entering the forest, in addition to the camping fee.



EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Emergency

Notify forest headquarters, forest staff or call 911.

Public phones are located on County H near Copper Range and on Hwy 2 in Brule.

Emergency messages can be left for campers by calling the forest headquarters

(715) 372- 5678

or the Douglas County Sheriff’s Department

(715) 395-1371.

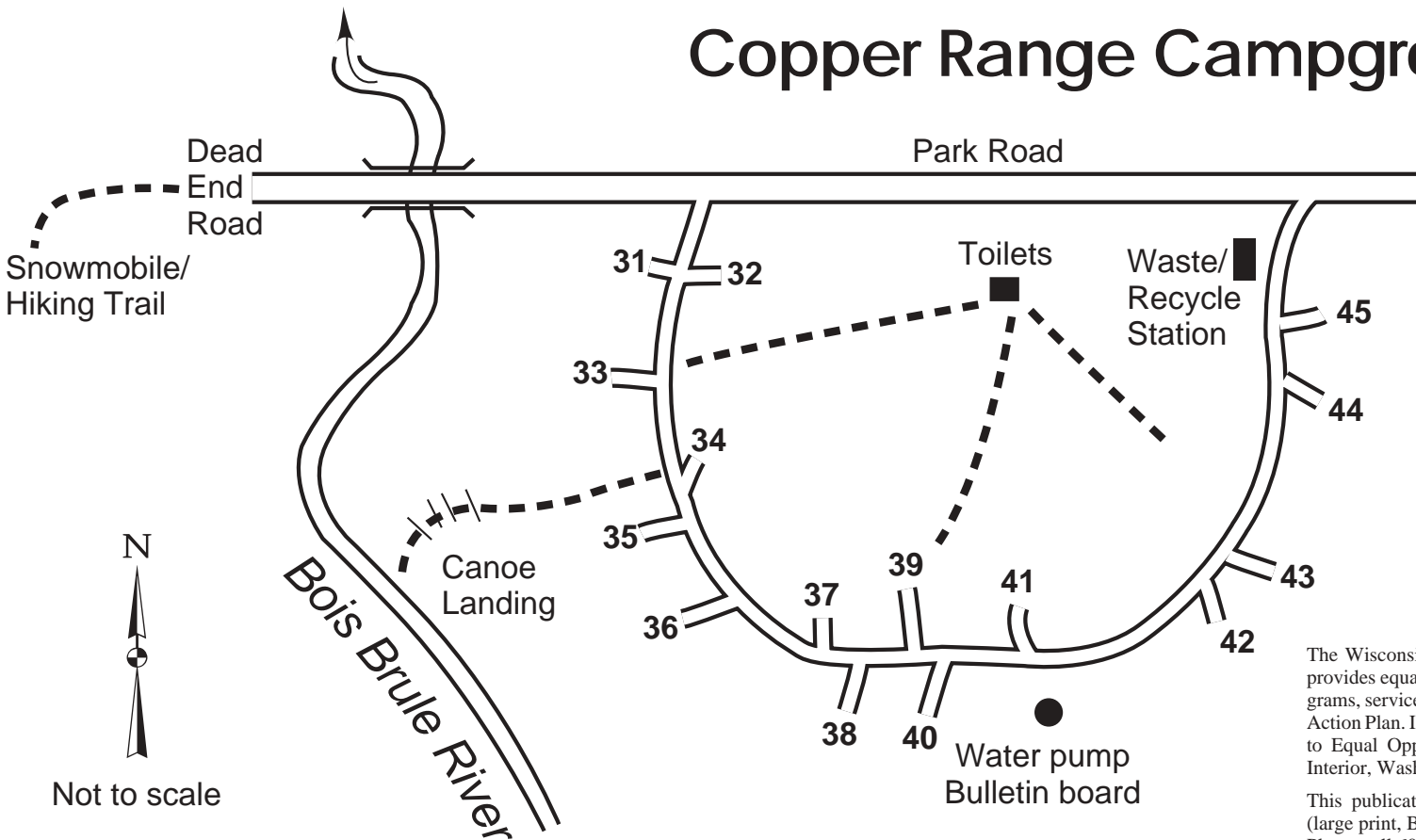
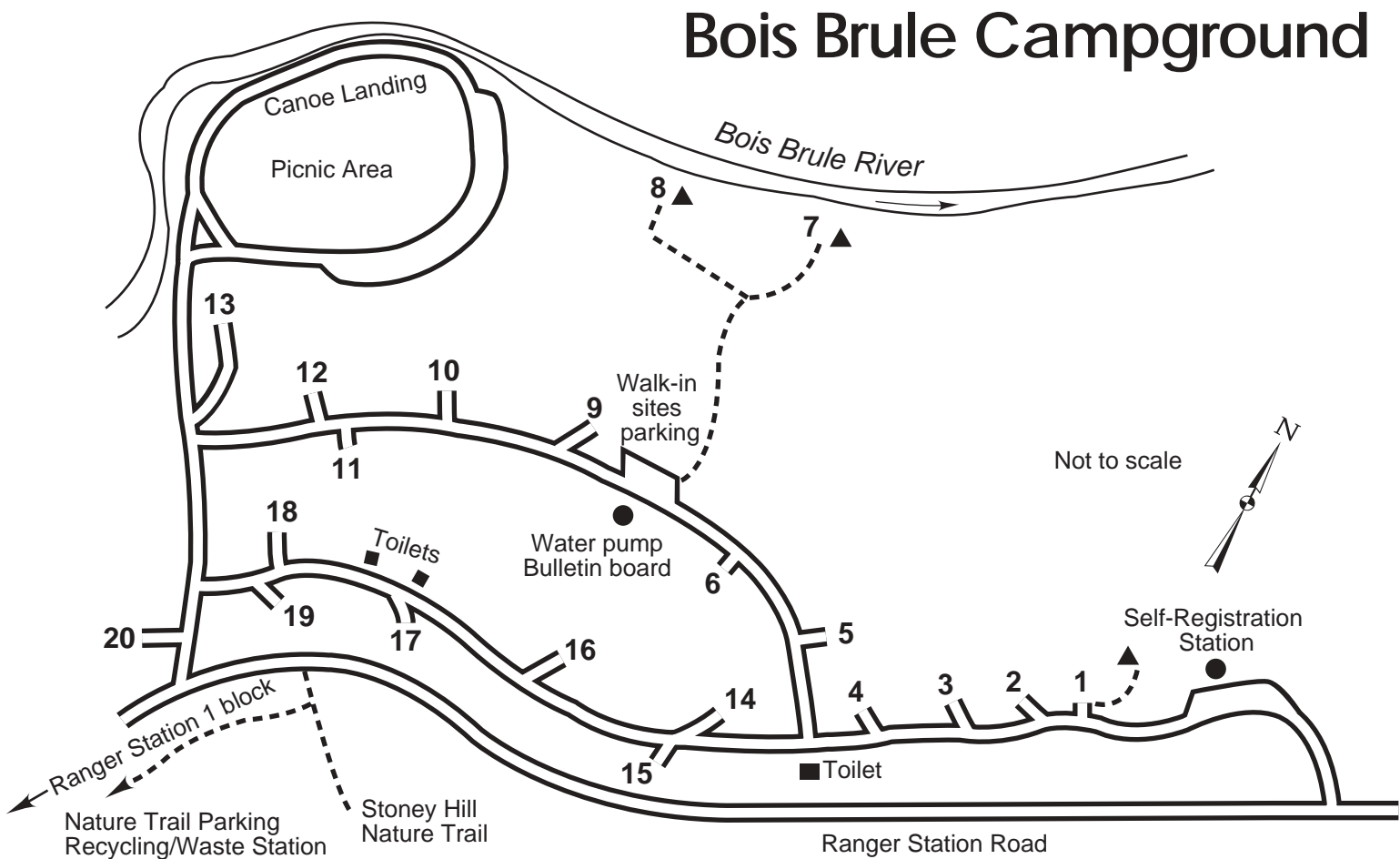
Non-emergency – Notify the forest headquarters or staff.

Medical assistance is available at St. Mary’s Hospital of Superior, 3500 Tower Ave.,

(715) 392-8281, 25 miles west of the forest.

Messages

Will be delivered to campers by calling the forest office (715) 372-5678 or may be mailed to the Brule River State Forest, 6250 S. Ranger Rd., Brule, WI 54820



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